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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 CHENGDU 000248

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SUBJECT: TIBET PARTY OFFICIAL DERIDES DALAI LAMA, YET WELCOMES HIM
"HOME"

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CLASSIFIED BY: David E. Brown, Consul General, U.S. Consulate
General Chengdu.

REASON: 1.4 (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: The Dalai Lama bears exclusive responsibility for the breakdown in talks with PRC officials, which Beijing is open to resuming once the Dalai Lama abandons his "hidden agenda" for independence and accepts "history" that Tibet has always been a part of China, a Tibet Communist Party United Front Department official told Consul General October 20 in Lhasa. The Dalai Lama should focus on religion, following the path of the Buddha, and should "get out of politics." The Dalai Lama was behind the 2008 unrest, but China does not fear him. In fact, the Dalai Lama should recognize his historical responsibility and return to China, the official said.

¶2. (C) Comment: Despite the requisite rhetoric, the official displayed a nuanced level of sensitivity uncommon in our TAR interlocutors. Given the particularly heavy Party fervor we have encountered from TAR United Front officials in the past, this meeting was actually modestly encouraging for its tone, if not its substance. End Summary and Comment.

¶3. (SBU) Consul General and PolEconOffs met October 20 with Sonam Rinzin (Suolang Renzeng), Executive Vice Director of the TAR Chinese Communist Party United Front Department. (Note: The role of the United Front Department is to "implement the Party Central Committee's policy on the United Front; implement the Party's minorities policy; maintain contact between the CPC and important people outside the Communist Party including intellectuals, religious people, and local leaders; and implement Party initiatives to promote the unity of the nationalities." The United Front Department has had the lead in PRC talks with the "personal representatives of the Dalai Lama". End Note.)

Breakdown in Talks "All the Dalai Lama's Fault"

¶4. (SBU) The Dalai Lama bears full and exclusive responsibility for the breakdown in talks with PRC officials, Rinzin asserted, emphasizing that the negotiations regard the latter's personal status rather than the status of Tibet per se. The Dalai Lama ended the talks in 1989 because he was confident the Chinese Communist Party would soon fall. From 2002-2008, there were

nine rounds of talks held with the personal representatives of the Dalai Lama, but a memorandum presented to the Chinese side by these representatives from the Dalai Lama was simply a hidden scheme for independence. It was the Dalai Lama who decided to end the talks, but Beijing remains open to dialogue with the Dalai Lama, he continued.

¶5. (SBU) For the talks to resume, the Dalai Lama must end his "splittist" activities, recognize that Tibet has always been part of China, and recognize that Taiwan is part of China, Rinzin said. The Dalai Lama's stance, that he can recognize Tibet is now part of China while not admitting it was historically part of China, is not realistic. The Dalai Lama must accept history. It is now and "has been part of China just as a tree has roots," he said. "History is history." (Note: The Dalai Lama, in his May 10, 2009 speech on the 50th anniversary the Tibetan uprising, said, "The Chinese insistence that we accept Tibet as having been a part of China since ancient times is not only inaccurate but also unreasonable. We cannot change the past no matter whether it was good or bad. Distorting history for political purposes is incorrect." Post will report further septel on the PRC's fairly recent adoption of language that Tibet has been part of China "since ancient times." End Note.)

Dalai Lama Must Separate Church and State

¶6. (SBU) The Dalai Lama continues to act as both a political and a religious figure, but he should become a true disciple of Sakyamuni (the historical Buddha) and concentrate on religion. , Rinzin stated. The Dalai Lama gives a talk every March 10, the

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anniversary of his departure from Lhasa in 1959 - "I listen to it every year, this talk is always political." (Note: March 10 is actually the anniversary of the start of the 1959 Tibetan Uprising in Lhasa, which triggered the Dalai Lama's escape to India on March 17. End Note.) The Dalai Lama should turn to the very strict principles of Tsongkhapa, who founded the Gelug school of Tibetan Buddhism, and meditate on Tsongkhapa's teachings on cause and effect. (Comment: It is ironic that PRC officials place so much emphasis on this point of separating church from state while simultaneously claiming the Communist Party has sole authority to recognize reincarnations of Tibetan lamas. End Comment.)

¶7. (SBU) Rinzin said the Dalai Lama's purported suggestion that the Communist Party should retire having reached its 60th birthday, was further evidence of his political activity, and concluded that "The Dalai Lama should get out of politics." (Note: Rinzin was referencing Zhu Weiqun, China's top negotiator for Tibet issues and Executive Deputy Director of the Central United Front Work Department in Beijing, who alleged in an interview with the German magazine Focus ([URL tinyurl.com/zhuweiqun-focus](http://tinyurl.com/zhuweiqun-focus)) that the Dalai Lama had made these unwelcome birthday comments. End Note.)

Dalai Lama's Goal: Autonomy, Independence, or "Power"?

¶8. (SBU) The Dalai Lama says that he has given up on Tibetan

independence, Rinzin continued, but you must pay attention to his actions, not his words. The Dalai Lama wants to increase both the size and the degree of Tibetan autonomy, and wants Tibet to become a Special Administrative Region like Hong Kong. Yet many of these Tibetan areas outside the TAR were never under the administrative authority of the Dalai Lama. This is the Dalai Lama's "Middle Way." It is a recipe for overturning the PRC and creating chaos, Rinzin argued.

¶9. (C) Comment: While true that historically Lhasa was not always able to exert political control over the Tibetan areas of Kham and Amdo, which are now incorporated into Qinghai, Gansu, Sichuan, and Yunnan Provinces, Rinzin's point is misleading, as Tibetans in these areas were the first to take up arms against the People's Liberation Army in 1959 and given a choice between Beijing or Lhasa would almost certainly choose the latter.

¶10. (C) The Dalai Lama's 1988 proposal, delivered in a speech in Strasbourg to the European Parliament proposed creation of a self-governing democratic Tibet "in association with the People's Republic of China" as a middle choice between current autonomy and full independence, borrowing the central Buddhist tenet of the Middle Way. Though the Dalai Lama said in 1992 that due to lack of progress from the PRC side he was no longer bound by the 1988 proposal, in a second address in Strasbourg in 1996 he reiterated these same principles, adding his "willingness to start negotiations with China anytime, anywhere without any preconditions." End Comment.

¶11. (SBU) Dalai Lama wants to give a so-called higher degree of autonomy to the children of his old serfs, people whom China has now educated, Rinzin said. The Tibetan people suffered under the Dalai Lama, under a regime worse than that of medieval Europe. The Dalai Lama left Tibet in 1959 and he has not helped Tibet since, but has instead caused many problems for Tibet's stability. He says make Tibet a zone of peace -- why? It is already free. The Tibetan people already have power, they are now on a road suitable to their development needs. The Dalai Lama cannot accept this. The Dalai Lama's proposals are for semi-independence -- he wants Tibet to split away from China. It is not autonomy that the Dalai Lama really wants, it is his own power, Rinzin said.

"We Are Not Afraid of the Dalai Lama"

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¶12. (SBU) Eighteen people died after the March 14, 2008 riots, Rinzin continued. This was caused by the Dalai Lama. The Dalai Lama has stirred up Tibet, but we in China are not afraid of one man. We are not afraid of the Dalai Lama. (Note: This sentiment of not fearing the Dalai Lama was repeated vociferously to PolEconOff by a TAR Foreign Affairs Office official during a separate trip to Ganden Monastery in a conversation questioning the purpose of security cameras all over the monastery. End Note.) The Tibetan people don't want violence, he said. The Dalai Lama clique must not move to violence as it did in 1959, 1989, and 2008. We hope that the Dalai Lama will make a contribution to Tibet. Violence does great harm to innocent people. The Tibetan people hope that the Dalai Lama will do good for Tibet. Yet we are confident of Tibet's future regardless of what the Dalai Lama does, Rinzin said.

Dalai Lama "Welcome" in China

¶13. (SBU) China has long wanted for the Dalai Lama to find his place here, Rinzin reported. Even after the Dalai Lama left in 1959, the official position of the deputy director of China's National People's Congress was held in reserve for him until ¶1964. In 1989 China invited the Dalai Lama to attend the funeral of the 10th Panchen Lama in Beijing, but he refused. I worry that some countries and some NGOs support the Dalai Lama, Rinzin said. The Dalai Lama needs to recognize his historical responsibility -- the Dalai Lama is moving further and further away from China, he added.

¶14. (C) Comment: Despite the harsh rhetoric and requisite propaganda, Rinzin displayed (or was willing to display) a nuanced understanding of Tibetan history and a level of sensitivity uncommon in our TAR interlocutors. In discussing history, for example, he accurately noted the various historical points where Tibetan religious and secular rule were melded, and where discussing the Dalai Lama he generally used the actual term "Dalai Lama" rather than the usual politicized and less respectful usage of just "Dalai" or "Dalai clique." Given the particularly heavy Party fervor we have encountered from TAR United Front officials in the past, this meeting was actually modestly encouraging for its tone, if not its substance. End Comment.
BROWN